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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - UKRAINE: VICTORY OF YUSHCHENKO

PARIS - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2004

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

[1](#)1. UKRAINE: VICTORY OF YUSHCHENKO

(B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

THE TRAGEDY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA CONTINUES TO DOMINATE HEADLINES TODAY AND EDITORIALISTS REFLECT ON THE SCOPE OF THE CATASTROPHE, THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF NATURAL PHENOMENA AND THE SOLIDARITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS.

THE FINANCIAL PRESS FOCUSES ON THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE CATASTROPHE FOR THE ASIAN ECONOMY AND MARKETS. THE BLOW TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE REGION COMES AT A TIME "WHEN TOURISM HAD INCREASED AS THE FEAR OF BIRD FLU AND SARS HAD DIED DOWN." (ECONOMIC RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS)

ON THE OUTCOME OF THE LATEST ROUND IN THE ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE, COMMENTATORS TODAY AGREED THAT UKRAINE HAS TAKEN GREAT STRIDES NOT JUST IN TERMS OF POLITICAL AUTONOMY BUT ALSO TOWARDS REAL DEMOCRACY. RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO'S EDITORIAL CALLS THE ELECTION "HISTORIC." HOWEVER, REPORTS AND EDITORIALS ALSO NOTE THAT THE COUNTRY REMAINS DEEPLY DIVIDED AND THAT YUSHCHENKO WILL HAVE TO SHOW A GREAT DEAL OF TACT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A SEMBLANCE OF NATIONAL COHESION. (SEE PART C)

THE POSSIBILITY OF EU MEMBERSHIP FOR UKRAINE ALSO ELICITS A NUMBER OF COMMENTARIES: "RUSSIA HAS LOST AN OBEDIENT SERVANT AND EUROPE HAS GAINED A NEW PROBLEM TO DEAL WITH." (FRANK DE BONDT IN REGIONAL DAILY SUD OUEST)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

UKRAINE: VICTORY OF YUSHCHENKO

"THE UKRAINIAN LESSON"

THE UNSIGNED EDITORIAL IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE (12/28): "ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT, THE NEW PRESIDENT WILL HAVE TO FIND A SUBTLE BALANCE BETWEEN THE COUNTRY'S BIG BROTHER - RUSSIA. AND THE WESTERN WORLD THAT IT ASPIRES TO IMITATE. BETWEEN THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF NATO AND THE EU. AND THE REALPOLITIK THAT INCITES IT NOT TO CLASH HEAD ON WITH THE KREMLIN. EUROPE'S ROLE WILL BE TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP UKRAINE DEVELOP A STABLE DEMOCRACY AND A MODERN ECONOMY."

"YUSHCHENKO'S CHALLENGES"

COMMUNIST L'HUMANITE'S PAUL FALZON (12/28): "THE NEW PRESIDENT WILL URGENTLY HAVE TO TAKE STEPS TO RECONCILE WITH RUSSIA WHICH BLATANTLY SUPPORTED YUSHCHENKO'S OPPONENT DURING THE CAMPAIGN. PUTIN MAY HAVE MELLOWED SOMEWHAT, BUT IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT HE MAY SEEK TO MAKE YUSHCHENKO PAY FOR THE SUPPORT THAT HE GOT FROM EUROPE AND THE U.S. RUSSIA HAS LOST FACE. AND COULD TRY TO PROVE TO THE NEW UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT THAT IT REMAINS A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH BY FUELING TENSIONS IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE COUNTRY. YUSHCHENKO SEEMS TO HAVE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE THREAT WHEN HE STATED THAT HIS FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT WOULD BE TO MOSCOW."

"UKRAINE MUST BE REUNITED"

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE PLOQUIN'S EDITORIAL IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (12/28): "IN THIS UNCERTAIN PERIOD SEVERAL SCENARIOS ARE POSSIBLE: FIRST, THAT UKRAINE COULD UNDERGO A DYNAMIC PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION; NEXT, THAT IT COULD SUCCUMB TO A MORE CHAOTIC AND SLOW EVOLUTION AND LAST THAT IT COULD SIMPLY GET STUCK IN A RUT. THE OUTCOME DEPENDS FOREMOST ON THE UKRAINIANS, BUT ALSO ON THE LINES THAT WILL BE THROWN TO THEM BY RUSSIA, EUROPE AND THE U.S. THE EU ESPECIALLY WILL HAVE TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO VIKTOR YUSHCHENKO THAT IF HIS COUNTRY ASPIRES TO EU MEMBERSHIP, IT WILL HAVE TO EMBODY THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ORANGE REVOLUTION."

"THE FOURTH ROUND"

CHARLES LAMBROSCHINI IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (12/28): "THE NEW UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT NOT ONLY SURVIVED AN ATTEMPT AT POISONING BUT HE HAS ALSO BECOME A LION. THE UKRAINIANS HAVE

NOT ONLY CHOSEN A CANDIDATE, THEY HAVE IMPOSED DEMOCRACY. AFTER THREE ROUNDS, YUCHENKO NOW NEEDS TO WIN THE FOURTH. HE WILL HAVE TO CALM THE MORE RADICAL FACTIONS. AND FIND A WAY TO REUNIFY A COUNTRY THAT HAS BEEN DEEPLY DIVIDED BY THE ALARMIST PROPAGANDA OF YUSHCHENKO'S OPPONENT VIKTOR YANUKOVITCH. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE UNITY, YUSHCHENKO WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH MOSCOW. BECAUSE UKRAINE WILL NEVER FIND APPEASEMENT UNTIL RUSSIA HAS ONCE AND FOR ALL OVERCOME ITS IMPERIALISTIC NOSTALGIA."

"YUSHCHENKO: A CLOSELY WATCHED PRESIDENT"
SACHA BALIT VANDERBROUCK IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR (12/28): "YUSHCHENKO WILL HAVE TO WORK AROUND UKRAINE'S BIG BROTHER -RUSSIA, AS THE LATTER COULD STILL SEEK TO DESTABILIZE THE COUNTRY. YUSHCHENKO HAS NEVER HIDDEN HIS FONDNESS FOR THE WEST NOR DESIRE TO SEE HIS COUNTRY ONE DAY BECOME PART OF THE EU. THE EU, FOR ITS PART, IS IN A VERY DELICATE SITUATION TODAY. INDEED, A MAJORITY OF EU MEMBER STATES ARE NOT FAVORABLE TO UKRAINIAN MEMBERSHIP IN THAT IT COULD STRAIN THE EU'S RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA. THE U.S. HOWEVER, DOES NOT SEEM OVERLY CONCERNED BY THIS AND IS DILIGENTLY WORKING IN THE WINGS FOR UKRAINE'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO WHICH COULD OPEN A WHOLE NEW PANDORA'S BOX." WOLFF